

ROSENBERG et al., Ser. No. 09/787,079

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (currently amended) A process for producing tablets by melt extrusion, in which an extrudable pharmaceutical mixture is heated and extruded in the form of a continuous product strip, wherein, in a first stage, the still deformable product strip is compressed to a continuous tablet belt, the individual tablets in the belt being connected together by product webs, in a second stage, downstream of the first stage, the tablet belt is allowed to cool to form a solidified tablet belt, in a third stage, downstream of the second stage, ~~and the tablets are finally singulated and deflashed, wherein firstly the tablets are mechanically singulated in a continuous process, and then the singulated tablets are transported further to a fourth stage downstream of said third stage where the singulated tablets are~~ and subsequently deflashed.
2. (original) A process as claimed in claim 1, wherein a force with a component perpendicular to the plane of the tablet belt is allowed to act on the tablet belt for singulation of the tablet.
3. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein a force with a component parallel to the plane of the tablet belt is allowed to act on the tablet belt for singulation of the tablets.
4. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 2, wherein the perpendicular force component is generated by diverting the solidified tablet belt out of its transport plane.
5. (previously presented) A process as claimed in claim 3, wherein the parallel force component is generated by exerting a traction force on the solidified tablet belt.
6. (canceled)
7. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the singulating

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means comprises at least one rotatable roller for diverting the tablet belt out of a transport plane of the first transport means,

8. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 7, wherein the singulating means comprises two counter-rotating rollers which can be pressed against one another.
9. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein the singulating means comprises at least one brush roller or embossed roller.
10. (canceled)
11. (previously presented) An apparatus as claimed in claim 12, wherein a second transport means is provided between the singulating means and the deflashing means and comprises a shaking or vibrating unit.
12. (previously presented) An apparatus for producing tablets, comprising at least one extruder means for heating a pharmaceutical mixture, means for shaping a tablet belt from said extruded heated pharmaceutical mixture arranged downstream of said extruder, first transport means for said tablet belt comprising means for cooling the extruded tablet belts and which is arranged downstream of said shaping means, and means for singulating and deflashing said tablets, wherein said means for singulating and deflashing said tablets comprise at least one singulating means arranged downstream of said first transport means, and at least one deflashing means arranged downstream of said singulating means and spatially separate therefrom.

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